

OPERATING MANUAL
for
QUALIFICATION STANDARDS FOR GENERAL SCHEDULE POSITIONS

SECTION I. HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

This Manual (generally referred to as the *Qualification Standards Operating Manual*) contains qualification standards that have been established by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) for General Schedule (GS) positions in the Federal Government. It is directed primarily to personnel specialists who need to determine whether applicants meet the minimum requirements for the positions being filled. The information in this Manual may also be of interest to supervisors and managers, high school and college placement officials, applicants, and others who wish to obtain information about Federal employment qualifications. However, users of this material should be aware that the broad guidelines in this Manual are not intended to provide detailed information about the specific qualification requirements for individual positions. Such information, e.g., a description of the specialized experience requirements for a particular position, is normally included in the vacancy announcement that OPM and agencies issue when they have a position to fill. Information about the work performed in General Schedule occupational series is contained in the *Handbook of Occupational Groups and Series* and the *Position Classification Standards*, and is not repeated in this Manual.

Qualification standards are intended to identify applicants who are likely to be able to perform successfully on the job, and to screen out those who are unlikely to do so. They are not designed to rank candidates, identify the best qualified applicants for particular positions, or otherwise substitute for a careful analysis of applicants' knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Users of this Manual should familiarize themselves with the general organization of the material to facilitate locating information about particular subjects or occupations. Section II, "General Policies and Instructions," is the key to understanding and using the qualification standards in this Manual. It contains basic information that applies across occupations, and should be considered an integral part of the standards themselves. The indexes (Section III), test requirements (Section V), medical requirements summary (Section VI), and technical notes (Section VII) are quick references to help users find specific information. For example, to find out whether a written or performance test is required for a particular occupation and grade level, users of this Manual should refer to Section V, "Test Requirements." "Technical Notes and Updates" and "Transmittal Sheets" should be filed as received in Sections VII and VIII, respectively. Section IV, "Qualification Standards," is the largest section of the Manual. Section IV-A includes "Group Coverage Qualification Standards" that describe common patterns of education, experience, or other requirements that apply to many different occupational series. Section IV-B, "Individual Qualification Standards and Occupational Requirements in Series Order," provides information about the minimum requirements for each occupational series. Information about test requirements is generally not included in Section IV, since it is provided separately in Section V.

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